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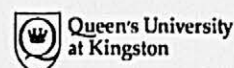
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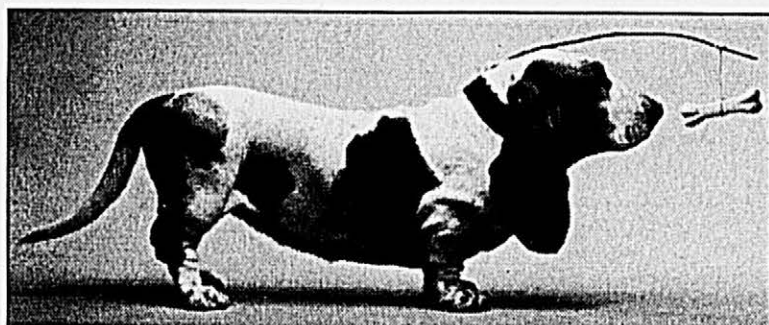
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Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec

March 23 7:00 PM • The Holocaust •
Dr. Alain Goldschlager
University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

March 23 8:30 PM • Armenian Religious Monuments in Turkey •
Dr. Herand M. Markarian
Congers, New York

March 24 4:30 PM • The Cambodian Genocide •
Dr. Benedict F. Kiernan
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

March 24 6:00 PM • The Rwandan Genocide •
Dr. William Schabas
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March 24 7:30 PM • The Armenian Genocide •
Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian
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LETTERS

To the Daily,

Jack Kevorkian used to call what he does "medicide" until it was pointed out that the term means literally "the killing of medicine." Many feared that killing the medical profession was exactly what he would accomplish if he succeeded in turning physicians into agents of death who were authorized to put the sick out of our emotional and financial misery. But it appears to already be too late.

Although partial-birth abortion has been condemned by the medical profession as never justified, the profession has taken no action against its practitioners. Consider what kind of mind it takes to hold a perfectly formed human child squirming in one's hands and then puncture its skull and suck its brains out. Do such as these really qualify to be called medical doctors? Then why are they still members in good standing and allowed to continue this horrific practice?

The byword of the medical profession used to be "above all do no harm," and the Hippocratic oath used to say "I will give no deadly

medicine." It also included an explicit prohibition against committing abortion. (Perhaps this has something to do with why it has quietly disappeared from medical schools.) What has become of the medical profession when it welcomes into its ranks those unethical practitioners who have prostituted their skills to destroy human life, accepts abortion when there is no medical indication, and intrudes itself into families by condoning surgery on minors without parental permission or knowledge? Yet many, duped by the wedge issues of pain and personal autonomy, want to trust this thoroughly corrupted brotherhood with the end of life decisions for the weakest and most vulnerable among us.

We are now far from the experience of the Netherlands where euthanasia is legal. The Dutch now fear entering their own hospitals where any lives are involuntarily ended in spite of so-called safeguards.

Alfred Lemmo

The McGill Daily has opened all positions for next year's editorial board. All staff members are eligible to run. Elections will take place on Thursday, March 26. Drop by the office (Shatner B-03) for more information.

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Hyde Park

The Flag Fetish

When I came back to McGill after an extended stay out of the country, I was surprised to see how the Maple Leaf had mushroomed on knapsacks all over campus and elsewhere in the city.

The confirmation that this is not just an anglo Montréal phenomenon came with the recent draping of Nagano's Olympic village in red and white. In the same vein, the self-important act of spreading out a huge Canadian flag at the closing ceremony of the Winter Olympics was almost as embarrassing as last Thursday's [February 26] Question Period in the House of Commons, when Liberal and Reform MPs drowned out a Bloquist's inquiry about the incidents in Japan with a rendition of the national anthem — in English, of course.

Mogul skier Jean-Luc Brassard's comments on the lack of decorum of maple-leaving the athlete's village hit the nail on the head: the Canadians were behaving like Americans. What many find disturbing is not that flag waving and zealous patriotism for universal consumption are un-Canadian (whatever that means), but that they constitute an unthinking mimicry of the American ethos.

I see this current explosion of a typical Canadian nationalism as a reaction to the threat of Quebec's secession. The fear of an end to Canada as we know it has generated an enormous amount of insecurity. This has made many embrace a primary sense of identity which the federal authorities do their best to encourage. It seems the Maple Leaf is worn as a fetish to make people feel good by casting away the evil spirit of separatism, though they don't consider that the effect is likely to be the opposite.

The real danger is the emergence of a nationalistic orthodoxy in Canada. So many people are taking symbols like flag and anthem so solemnly that the trend may eventually make this a country where we are required to pledge allegiance and (caramba!) memorize the elusive words to "O Canada." We can avoid this by reviving the healthy practice of unpatriotic irreverence and by cultivating the values of community and citizenship in contra position to reactionary nationalism.

Alex Carrasco

Falling On Deaf Ears Women of Colour Collective defunct

by Wendy Lai

After six years of addressing issues at the intersection of sexism and racism, the Women of Colour Collective (formerly called Shakti) has ceased to exist due to lack of interest in the McGill community.

The Women of Colour Collective focused on "women of colour" as a consciously political and empowering identification for coalitional purposes, which at once recognized our similarities while acknowledged our heterogeneities. Our goal was to engage topics relevant to women of colour and the communities of which we are members. The way in which we sought to effect this was via discussion among women of colour, in order to share our experiences and voice our concerns, and grassroots activism, through which we could engage the wider community.

This ending is not due to the resolution of the challenges that face us; rather, it is a consequence of these issues broadening in scope and deepening in gravity. The (tenth annual) report of the McGill Ombudsperson lists "racist, sexist comments or behaviour" as one of her major concerns for the 1996-97 school year, and discusses "the economic climate and academic environment that generates many of these 'worse' case scenarios."

Specifically, the economic climate — the increasing cost of tuition and the continuing de-em-

phasis by governments on education and social programs that have great impact on women of colour — has made it more difficult for us to attend university, and, once here, forces our attention to financial matters (such as employment) rather than allowing us the energy to address political issues.

The academic environment requires that women of colour prove an absolute dedication to their respective fields of study in the face of increasing competition and in conservative surroundings where one cannot risk being perceived as having benefitted from Equal Opportunity policies.

These situations force right-leaning, individualist politics for the purposes of mere survival, both academically and otherwise.

Meanwhile, instances of racism and colonialism are ignored by the wider society. They are assumed by most to no longer exist and are thus even more dangerous and insidious. Further, while the feminist community on campus shows no sign of faltering, there are now only a few outspoken women of colour within it, where there had previously been several more.

Our activities have included organizing events for International Women's Week, film screenings, workshops on racism and sexism for campus services, and helping initiate and coordinate girlSpace, a discussion/action workshop for teenage girls. We have hosted talks by Sunera Thobani (NAC), Nahla Abdo (Professor, Carleton University), Rozena Maart (author), Rebecca Walker (writer and activist), Larissa Lai (novelist), and Chrystos (poet). We have produced CKUT radio programs, coordinated special issues of

the McGill Daily on women of colour, and conducted open forums on topics such as anthropological racism and violence against Third World women. In May 1997, we published a collection of poetry by women of colour, titled *penumbra*.

A massive poster campaign in September 1997 generated minimal response from women of colour on campus, and only moderate response from the McGill community. The posters asked relevant questions such as "Does Canadian feminism address race?" and "Does a McGill education serve women of colour as it does white men?" to which few people rose to the challenge to answer.

In January, the Women of Colour Collective also identified the need at McGill for a racial harassment policy, noting that there is no institutional mechanism that officially handles issues of discrimination based on factors such as race. We attempted to begin a project to research and lobby for a racial harassment policy at this university, since all other major universities in Canada have such a policy. (Although racial harassment falls under the protocols for general grievances, we believe that this procedure is inadequate for this type of discrimination.) Our calls to action fell on deaf ears at McGill, mainly due to ineffective communication channels. The sparse membership of the collective prevented us from undertaking this task independently.

We continue to believe that women of colour share similar experiences, and that coalition is politically useful. However, a weak collective cannot be an asset. We will regain strength when we regain numbers.

Women's Words

Women's
prose and poetry
at Isart

by Adina Spivak

From Susan Elmslie's
"Smile me up Jackie"
What if we shared so many secrets

I knew what death was like, how
it works

Its way into skin like a bad tattoo

A recent birthday card for my father read: "There's a perfectly good reason why this birthday card is late (turn over card) I wanted to make your birthday last longer." The same could be said about the upcoming Women's Words event. It is in honour of International Women's Day which was stretched out into a month long exhibit of women's art at Isart. Women's Words is being held on the last day of this exhibit, Sunday March 29.

Women's Words is a celebration of women's poetry and prose featuring women with a variety of content, styles and experience in their writing. In other words, it's an attempt to create a sense of community through creative writing by bringing together women who might not all normally be found on the same stage. From Mary di Michele, an established and widely published poet with several books, to three young creative writing students at Concordia, Adina Spivak,

Emily Southwood and Carolyn Hu, who also happen to be three of di Michele's students, with little or no experience at reading, mixed in with Masarah Van Eyck, Rachel Rose and Susan Elmslie, who fall somewhere in between in terms of experience, the evening should prove to be a dynamic and fresh show.

While many will look forward to di Michele's confident and richly developed poetry, each of the women brings a different perspective that makes the event strong as a whole package.

The focus is on the "magic that happens in poetry and prose," says Masarah Van Eyck, one of the women who will be reading. Van Eyck is a doctoral student in History at McGill who says that for her, poetry is a way to "express things in a language which is a very linear, logical language."

As for the other writers, Susan Elmslie, the only other woman to have a chapbook published, brings to the show a refined balance between an accessible, yet complex style of poetry with a strong sense of rhythm and sound.

As for prose, Rachel Rose will read "Want," her piece that won the Bronwen Wallace Award but more importantly is successful in revealing

the narrator equally through her job and intimate relationships.

Emily Southwood's prose is touching and sarcastic in its confessional style. Carolyn Hu's is intriguing in its mantra-like tone.

While it's impossible to showcase the entire range of writing that women are producing now, the show makes an admirable attempt, with only two hours and seven writers, if I do say so myself.

So be sure to mark Women's Words on your calendar and then we'll see what we can do about stretching out International Women's Day into April.

From Susan Elmslie's
"Diaphanous Girl"
Find some black river and a boat
To carry you quietly. If this unavailable, polish
Some neglected silver
until it remembers its true splendour.

The directions are not very clear
I'm just making my way.

Women's Words is happening
Sunday March 29, 7h to 9h at
Isart (263 St. Antoine O. metro
Place d'Armes). Open to everyone.

The Sound Of A Woman's Voice

Women's Waves
on CKUT

by Jenny Warren

The seventeen hours of female focused programming, aired by CKUT on March 8th, entitled *Women's Waves*, began the inevitable countdown of International Women's Week. Throughout the duration of the programming, a feminine perspective was maintained, as all contributors were female. These perspectives were at the same time diverse ones, as women of different races, social classes, sexual preferences, and ages were represented. The subjects ranged from the nature of globalization, to women with disabilities and their perhaps unique perspective on the role and image of the female body, to a discussion on the relationship between feminism and the Spice Girls. Comic relief was supplied with raunchy, and

at the same time, inspirational women's music including such lyrics as, "put your weiner in my buns."

The diversity and presentation of these programmes is due to the specific intention of the co-ordinator of *Women's Waves*, Laura Clunie, to let the show roll with no predetermined intentions of content and style. *Women's Waves* was "to make space for women's voices." Of course, CKUT made efforts to branch out to the community, but at the same time this position was not used to dictate what issues were to appear on the programme. Equally important was making this media space relaxed, which was apparent in the conversational style of the programme as opposed to a hardlining question/answer format.

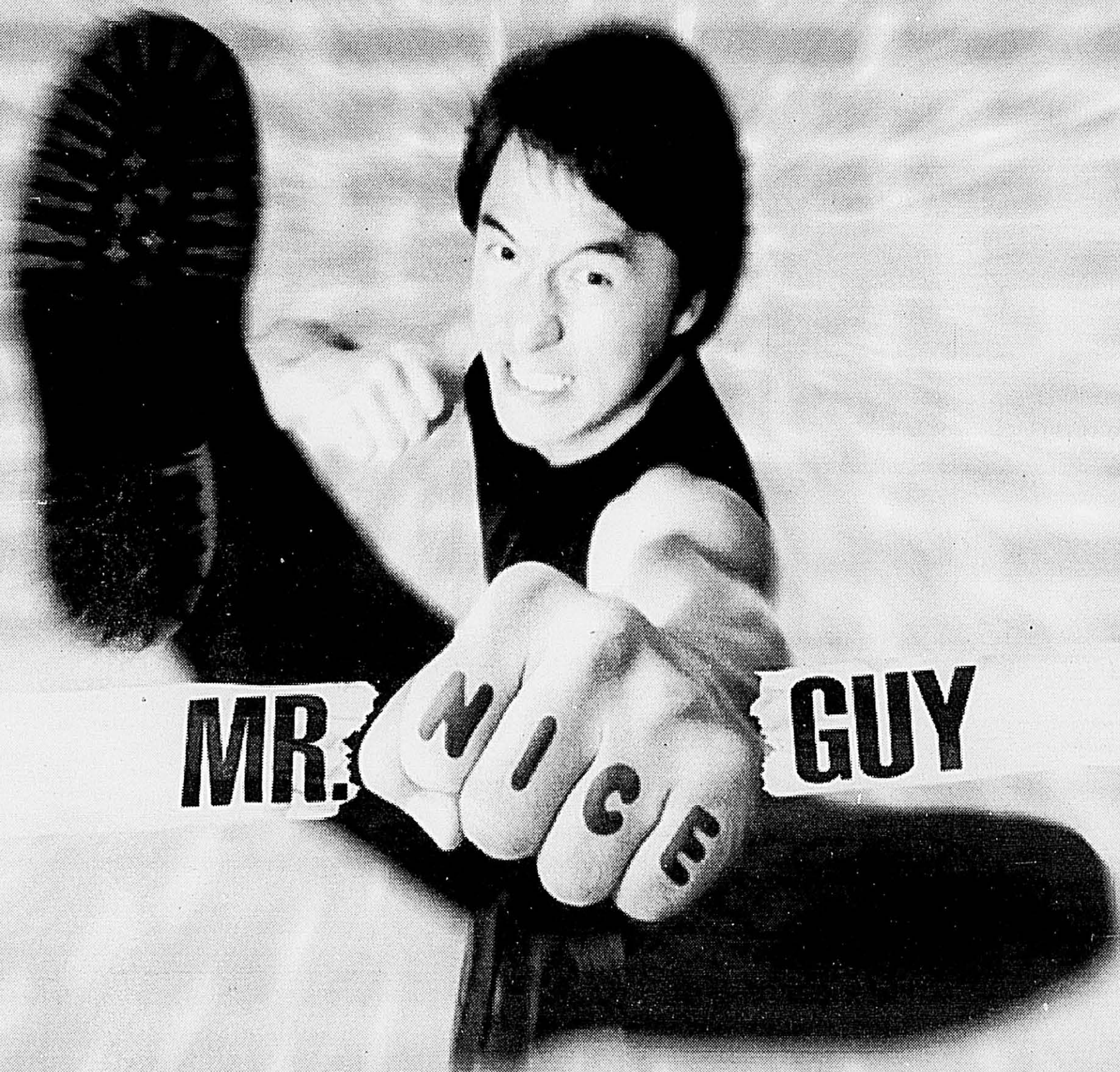
This raised the issue of what it means to communicate effectively. Clunie felt that allowing hardlining to lead a conversation "makes the interviewer's viewpoint the be all and end all, which is an abuse of power."

One such person who spoke on the programme was Patricia Monture-Angus, an Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and previously a Law professor at the University of Ottawa and Dalhousie. As a Mohawk woman, she criticized the woman's movement for ignoring and suppressing differences between women (particularly with respect to violence). Another section of the programme discussed women with dis-

abilities, which included a discussion between disabled women. They shared their unique perspective on the female body. They have realized that often there are assumptions made about disabled women. One said, "society covets beautiful bodies, and not beautiful minds." Some expressed how the concept of the term "family" takes on a new significance with a disabled mother. This situation calls for a deeper interdependency among family members, including a more active role on the part of the children and father. One could postulate that this could lead to the creation of fundamentally different values at the core of such a family. The question was raised of whether the children would grow up with a higher ideal

than body perfection. Ideas about women and the world could easily be spun from the issues discussed during these seventeen hours. The medium was used to facilitate communication of these ideas by encouraging openness on the part of the speaker and the listener, thus creating a more comprehensive context particularly for the listener. As in this article, and in the duration of International Women's Week, time and space are invariably a factor when exploring women's issues, and *Women's Waves* was no exception. Despite the time constraint, the explorations were thorough, deep, and interesting. Although the issues were undeniably political, they were also incredibly personal.

JACKIE CHAN



Fight first. Apologize later.

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NEW LINE CINEMA


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The McGill Daily


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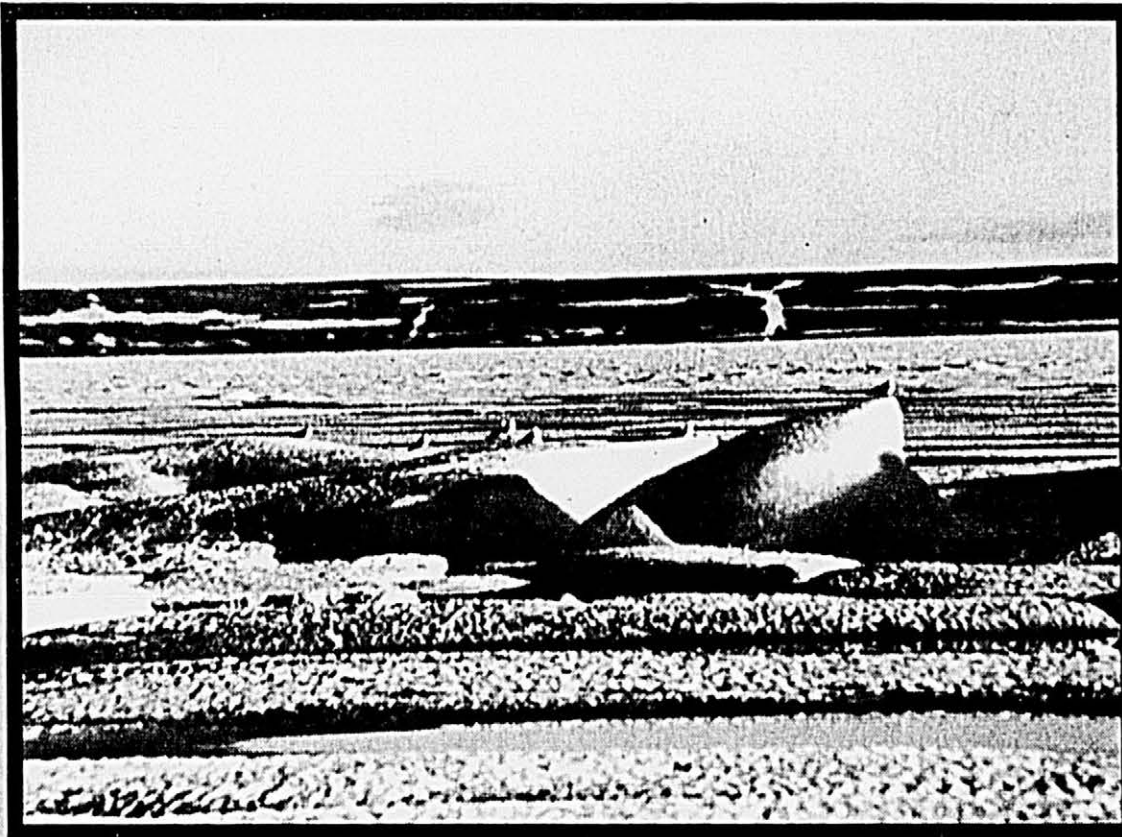
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Cryogenic Aesthetics

*The High Arctic
or
Post-Icestorm
Trauma?*

photo essay by Darlene Lim



Queer World Watch

New Zealand Transvestite Honored By Government

New Zealand's "Tranny Granny" has become the first transsexual to be made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for service to the community.

Jacqui Grant, who lives in Moana, was honored for her work with young people, including having fostered more than 50 children over the past 18 years.

Grant has lived as a woman for over 25 years and is thought to be the only transsexual approved for fostering by the state Children and Young Persons Service. Grant is presently a candidate for the Moana/Paroa ward of Grey District Council. Recent polls suggest he has a good chance of winning.

Source: *Queerplanet*

Balearics Nix Tranny Protections

A Parliamentary committee in Spain's Balearic Islands (which includes Ibiza and Mallorca) has declined to add transgendered identity to the islands' anti-discrimination policies.

The committee also vetoed proposals to make it easier for transgendered persons to change their names and receive government-funded sex-change operations.

The measures were supported by MPs from the United Left, Nationalist and Socialist parties but the center-right Popular Party, which holds a majority of seats, opposed the changes. The vote was 8-9 with one abstention.

The proposals were put forth by the Gay and Lesbian Balearic Association, Ben Amics.

Source: *Queerplanet*

130 Murdered In Brazil Last Year

Eighty-two gay men, 42 transvestites and six lesbians were murdered last year in Brazil because of their sexuality, according to a new report from Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB).

A majority of the killings took place in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. "Anti-gay intolerance and violence, particularly killings, are increasing in frequency, cruelty and

impunity," GGB said. "[According to] a survey carried out by DataFolha and Agencia do Estado: of all social minorities in Brazil, homosexuals are the main victims of prejudice and discrimination, more hated than blacks, Jews, women, indigenous or elderly people.

"Homosexuals are insulted and assaulted by strangers and relatives, thrown out of their homes, beaten by the police, rejected by churches and by the military."

Source: *Queerplanet*

BC Couple Measure Take Effect

British Columbia's groundbreaking law giving gay and lesbian couples the same rights and obligations as heterosexuals in the areas of child support, custody and access took effect February 4.

It is the first law of its kind in North America. If a same-sex couple breaks up, children will be entitled to spend time with and receive support from both parents. The partners can seek child-support payments from each other and the kids can sue for support.

"Children have the right to expect adequate support, appropriate custodial access and continuing caring relationships with both parents regardless of sexual orientation and marital status," said provincial Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh.

British Columbia has adopted several other gay-inclusive measures. Partners of civil servants receive spousal benefits, welfare officials recognize same-sex households when calculating benefits, gay couples have equal adoption rights, and gay partners are recognized under provisions regulating insider trading of securities.

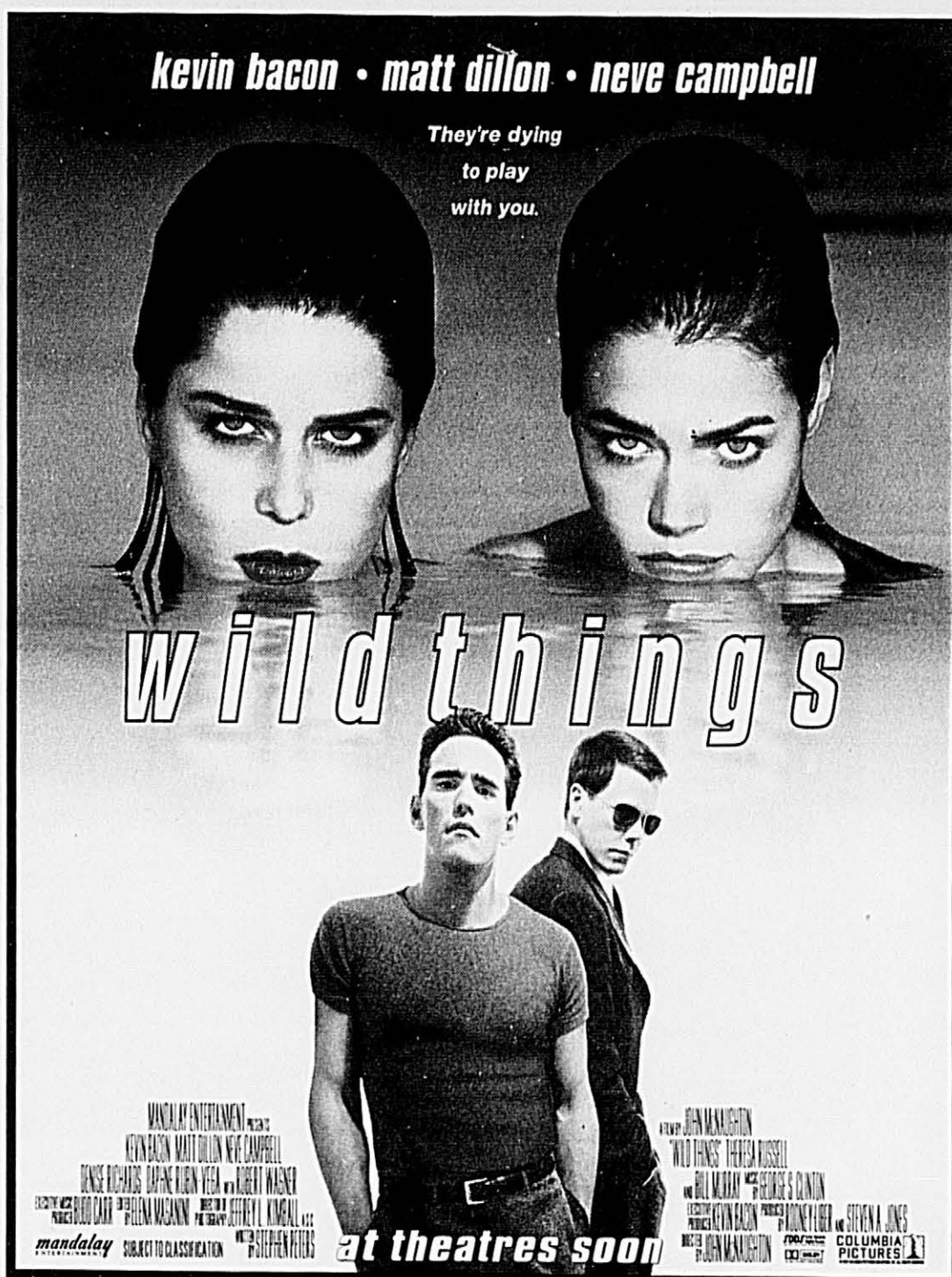
Source: *Queerplanet*

Megacity Provides Partner Benefits

The new mega-city of Toronto — formed by the January 1 merger of several neighboring municipalities — will provide benefits to same-sex partners of its employees.

At least two of the municipalities, East York and North York, previously did not treat gay workers fairly by refusing to provide these benefits.

Source: *Queerplanet*



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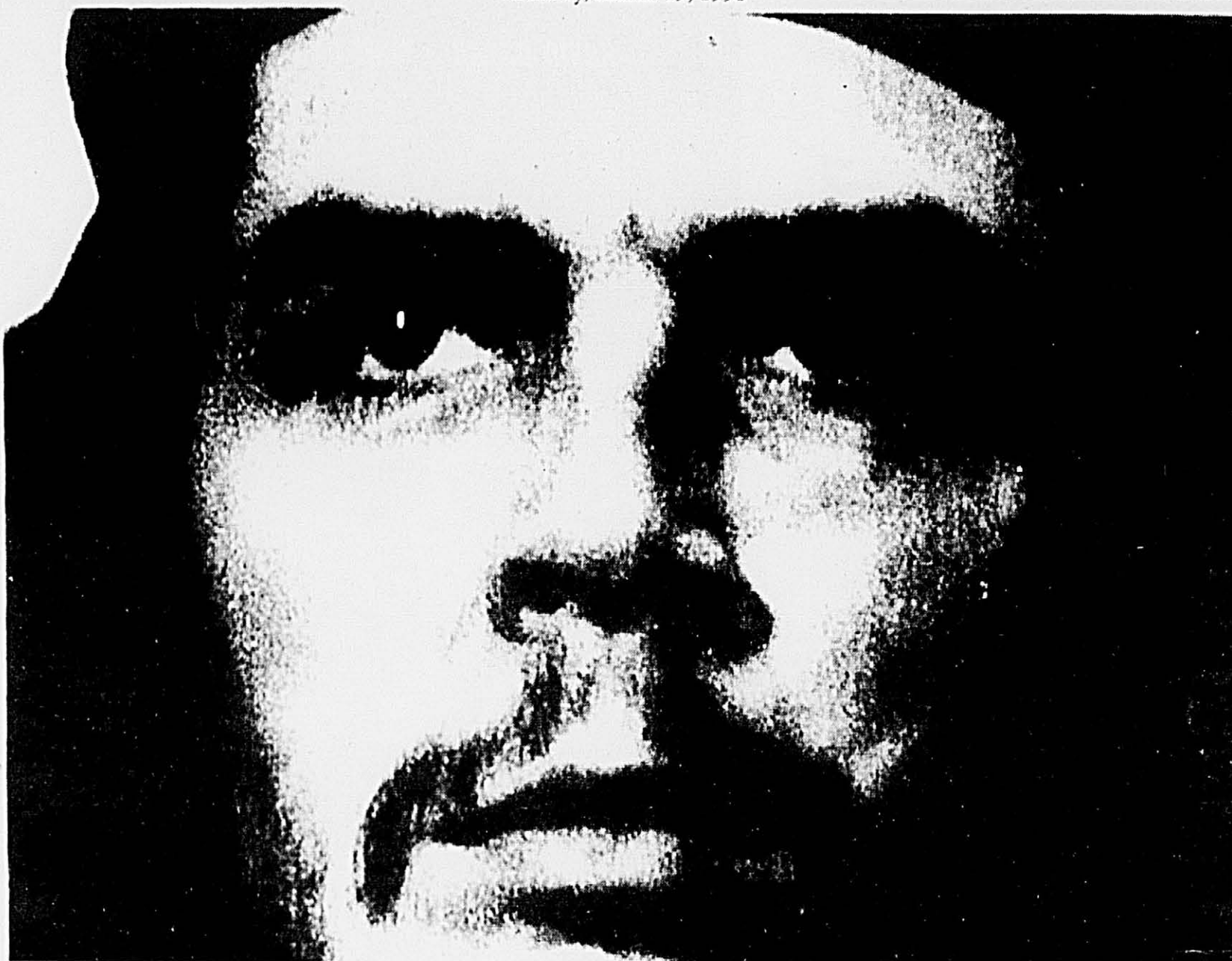
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GETTING THE RED OUT

A film about Che Guevara that's
actually *about* Che Guevara

by Neil Verma

I'm in love with a beautiful lady. You've probably met her before. Her name is the Revolution. I know, I know... it would never work. It's hard to love a polymorphous androgyne who talks too much. She never holds me when I'm sad, and she's always going away 'on business.'

And yeah, she's been around the block. She's been a bunch of words scrawled down by some German chap and his English buddy last century sometime. She's been a lady in a Goya painting and a dead child in a Spanish Civil War propaganda poster. Hell, she's even been a mathematical trajectory in a Russian Constructivist sculpture. You try loving a geometrical object.

And she's baaad (in the classical Michael Jackson sense). She's done some sad things to many people earlier this century. And more often than not, she's packin' heat. But I still can't help but love her. You take the good, you take the bad—that's how love is. Look, I don't make the rules.

People talk about her like a novelty these days. In the post-Soviet era, she's a slim joke for the intelli-

gentsia, and a hyperactive cousin to socially conscious politics. The great cynical brain of the West has tucked her into a pocket of dreams, never to be touched by the finger of the world. But I'm no political theorist with delusions of grandeur. I'm a film reviewer with delusions of grandeur, so let's get to the film.

Ernesto Che Guevara: The Bolivian Diary, is the movie, of course. It is a very sparse piece of celluloid documentary, put together by a fellow named Richard Dindo. You may remember Guevara as the hairy chap in the beret on that *Rage Against the Machine* album you don't listen to anymore. Few incarnations of the Revolution have been as romanticized as Guevara's career as a guerrilla; he's been the role model for most of the army-pants wearing civilians in the local hemisphere. The onus borne by Dindo is to investigate the core of that myth, to probe what Che genuinely was, and what he shot guns at people for.

So how do you do that? It's like an archaeological dig setting out to find out Achilles' favourite colour.

Myth explosion is as tricky a business as, well, guerrilla warfare. So here's the scoop.

Dindo shanghai's a copy of a journal Che kept during his 11-month guerrilla campaign in Bolivia. He throws in a series of newsreels that tell you about Che's political career in Cuba, his efforts in Africa, and how he planned to spark a chain of South American Revolutions. Add some former soldiers, and a few peasants that met Che, some picturesque mountains outside of La Paz, blowing grass and rivers. Shake well and stir.

And that's it. The narration consists of a deep-throated man reading from Che's diaries. The images are yellowed photographs and wind-wrinkled peasants high in the misty hills. 97 minutes of clouds, misunderstandings, and the story of 150 guerrillas hunted like vermin in the South American sun. Bullets, asthma, foot sores, starvation, loss, loneliness, and the millenarian prayer for a new world.

There are no actors, no music and no propaganda. This is the realm of minimalist documentary-

Dindo's deft, swift methodology for cutting through bullshit. The pagentry of the Bastille, the glorious grime of Victor Hugo's heroes, the triumph of Eisenstein's *Potemkin*: they aren't there. All you get is Che's unlovely prose replete with flat description, with slight supplementary details from narrator Judith Burnette.

All of which culminates in Guevara's execution, details of which are provided by a freckled woman in a refulgent black shirt, the last civilian to see him alive and the first to see him dead.

Minimalism only works when it strips away the pomp and splendor of the subject, yet retains the dignity of the essential subject. To hold on to the charisma while subverting the rhetoric—that, neighbour, is poignance. In this effort, Dindo succeeds. With almost no red around the edge, you still get Che's pensive conviction, his bellicose pragmatism, his sacrifices and his unwavering desire to die for the Revolution.

Yes, It's boring. Social Realist overtones would have given the intellectual spectator the candy he/she

expects from Che. Propagandist bias would have made this movie soaringly inspiring. Grass, mud and mountains aren't the stuff that dreams are made of.

But Dindo achieves his goal, so I still order you to see the film. As a living human being in the post-Soviet era, the Revolution is a part of your life. It is a historical imperative that you understand why people kill and die for ideologies, whatever they may be. To avoid the Revolution is to ignore one of the primary motivating agents of change in the configuration of action on this earth. This is part of the modern experience, like hot dogs.

And if you fall in love with the Revolution, I won't mind. She won't give me the time of day anyway.

Ernesto Che Guevara: The Bolivian Diary is playing at Parc tonight, at Cinema Décarie for two weeks, and will soon make its way into the hands of the sinister forces of international communism.

The Buddhist Invasion

The trivialization of a hallowed people

by Tal Pinchevsky

On the weekend of June 15, 1996, 100,000 people braved San Francisco's overcast skies to spectate the largest rock and roll benefit show since 1985's Live Aid. This melange of contemporary diplomats of popular music was titled the Tibetan Freedom Concert. Its purpose was to raise money for the Milarepa fund, an organization founded by rapper Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys, while raising awareness of the injustices faced by Tibet under Chinese imperialism. The event, which displayed groups such as Rage Against the Machine, Smashing Pumpkins, and the Fugees, raised \$800,000 for the fund, and the sincerity of Mr.

Yauch's actions was worn on his sleeve. Mr. Yauch appears to have built the framework for the inundation of Buddhist culture that has been brought to the attention of the Western world. The better part of this phenomenon, however, doesn't appear to involve the same conviction and genuine concern for Buddhist culture.

A commercial recently raised my head as profound words echoed from the television: "In the year 495, the basis of today's martial arts began...." The deep voice beckoned me further. The anti-climax came when I soon found that I was being lured into a promotion for the travelling Shaolin Monks, a group shar-

ing the same lineage as the Tibetan Buddhists. For \$30, I could bear witness to the monks at the venue which truly embodies their spirituality: the Molson Centre.

Although this particular hack rendering of Buddhism is cold and reprehensible, there are other examples of artists, like Adam Yauch, providing Westerners with a less exploitive view of Buddhist culture.

Most notable is Martin Scorsese, whose recent epic, *Kundun*, tells the story of His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, from his childhood, starting in 1933, until his fleeing Tibet toward India, in 1959. *Kundun* is a truer piece of Buddhist culture, especially when compared to the more feeble attempts at this subject matter, such as *Seven Years in Tibet*, starring Brad Pitt, and *Little Buddha*, starring that beloved thespian Keanu Reeves. *Kundun* presents practices of Buddhism that have existed for centuries. The film opens with the image of an intricately made sand sculpture with symbols denoting the ancient stories of Buddha. When the movie ends, this sculpture is swept away, paralleling the philosophy that all that enters the world soon departs only to return. *Kundun* also highlights this philosophy as a paradigm for the Dalai Lama's escape from Tibet, with plans to return when the Chinese threat subsides.

We have now distinguished, in this flooded introduction of Buddhism to the Western world, between attempts at respectful depic-

tion and those that are simply exploitive. There is a genuine interest in the mantra of the religion of Buddha, but that's not the only pre-occupation at play here. Upon evaluating this mass of Buddhist culture, I have come to a chilling realization: there is now a market demand for this subject matter.

That's right, Buddha is in, very in!! The Buddha frenzy will only further deteriorate into a festering three-ring circus, complete with ringmaster and bereft of any sincere spirituality.

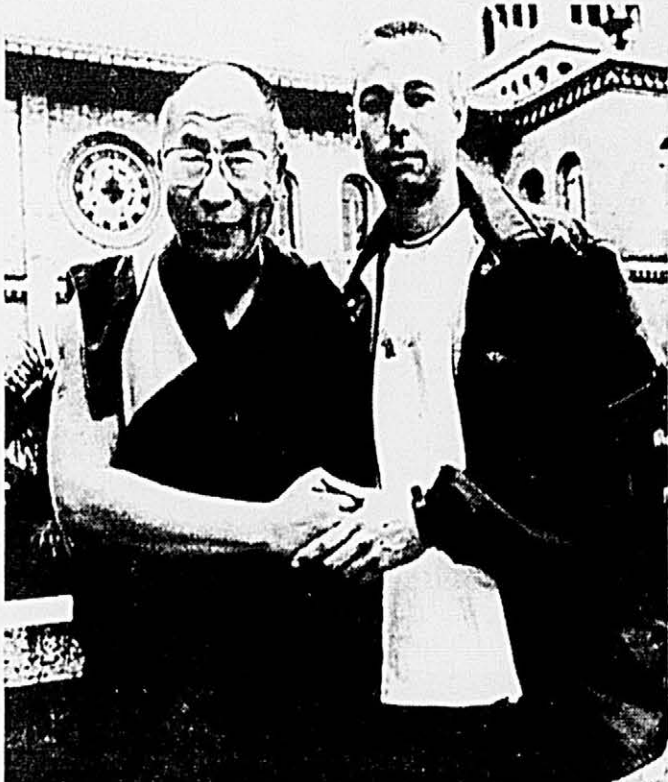
I suppose I can't completely fault the proprietors of this pretentious filth. Buddhism is among the most complicated and least taught topics in Western theology and history. Maybe the people marketing this exploitation of a religion aren't so much guilty of opportunism as of ignorance.

It is here that *Kundun* shines, by addressing some of the very questions that make Buddhism so complicated. While other films portray Tibet and its people as exotically foreign, Scorsese presents Buddhist practices and thought, attempting to capture their complexity. Scenes that might seem bland to the untrained eye and/or ear, are compensated by stimulating the mind through discussion of thousand-year old principles. One such principle is the source of one's suffering. Even at a young age, the Dalai Lama is able to elaborate on the subject. He is taught that he is the source of his own suffering; only through meditation, can he cleanse

himself spiritually. This is pursued further in a scene between His Holiness and a Chinese general. In response to the general's demands for surrender in order to liberate the Tibetan people, the Lama replies, "You cannot liberate me, General Tan. Only I can liberate myself." This scene embodies specific principles of Buddhism, while also conveying an anti-imperialist critique.

Now, for those of you who find I'm not being fair on these shrewd businessmen, allow me to put it in perspective. Day 2 of the 1996 Tibetan Freedom Concert, a show that was dedicated to the spirit of a people that embrace assertion through nonaggression, was plagued by a monstrous mosh pit. That day's show was concluded by the prayers and blessings of Buddhist monks, ushered in by Rage Against the Machine, who sang two songs entitled "Bullet in Your Head" and "Killing in the Name". It became increasingly evident that, although this concert is earnestly well-intended, very little education is taking place.

The Dalai Lama, in an interview with Yauch, stated that we can all contribute to the betterment of the world by developing a sense of compassion, characterized by closeness with others. Where in all the extravagant productions inspired by His Holiness, other than Scorsese's, is this point made? More importantly, how much more demeaning Hollywoodism do we have to witness to finally learn something substantial?



THE DALAI LAMA WITH CONCERT ORGANIZER ADAM YAUCH

Civilizing The Hobgoblin Of U.S. Racism

On institutionalized inequity in America

by John Lee

In the United States, "Blacks are the national suspect of the police" and "the Supreme Court is one of the most powerful institutions of racism." Coming from Bruce McM. Wright, a retired American Supreme Court Justice, these are damning indictments of the U.S.'s failure to diverge from its racially oppressive foundations. In *Bangs and Whispers: Enigmas of the Racial Vex*, a recent public lecture at McGill presented by the Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training, Wright eloquently highlighted the inequalities instilled in the American System.

A charismatic and erudite speaker, Wright offered no easy solutions, but began by telling his audience that "we are gathered here to brood a bit about hope." He rejected the false optimism of "do gooders" for a more gritty depic-

tion of inequality in the U.S. today. For him, it is important to truly understand the problems than apply trite, impractical solutions: "racism is a ferocious hobgoblin," he claimed, "that will never be slain by an idealistic excalibur."

Wright states that prejudice was built in the U.S. system from the beginning. The Founding Fathers, who all had black slaves, did not consider equality an issue; and their Constitution set a precedent for centuries of tacit support of racism. In the legal system, the ingrained discrimination of judges makes inequality a self-perpetuating phenomenon. As Wright stated, even black judges, such as Clarence "Uncle" Thomas "are emotionally white and bring racist baggage to the bench." At issue is the controversial suggestion that non-blacks cannot be held solely responsible for the racism crisis in

the U.S.

Wright is baffled by what he sees as the historic complicity of the black community with the institutions of their own oppression. He asks why blacks embraced the religion of the slave owners when it had nothing to say against slavery, as well as offering themselves in war service to a country that tortured them in peacetime. He also questions more recent black separatist movements that ignore white America and impose Islamic identity. The Million Man March, for example, to Wright was a "desperate sociological carnival." For him, blacks have done little to alter their situation in the U.S. and neither complicity nor separation will rectify this. Asked by an audience member if he had any hope for the future, Wright answered with an emphatic "no."

The intention, however, is not to encourage resignation. Wright is clearly being provocative in his damning prognosis of the American racial situation: he doesn't want action to come before understanding. His books, particularly the recent *Black Robes: White Justice*, focuses on the roots of U.S. prejudice. He advocates widespread education on racism to "civilise" America and he has demanded that judges, police officers and civil servants take exams in Black and Hispanic studies before being employed.

In a less convincing argument, Wright separates the U.S. and Canada on the point of inequality. For him, American racism is more deeply ingrained. He also states that Canadian Black communities want to integrate while those in the U.S. seem mostly to congregate. Clearly, though, racism and institutionalized

prejudice are not just American issues.

"Equality remains a mirage in the desert of the white mind," for Wright, and is an issue that must be confronted. He claims "we have learned little about racism and peacemaking" thus far. Inequality remains "a long festering sore on the face of nations."

After 20 years practicing law and 24 as a judge, Wright has the authority to comment on institutional prejudice. His diagnosis is that "racism is America's incurable disease." He appeals for individuals to understand the problems before hoping for a cure.

Bangs and Whispers: Enigmas of the Racial Vex was presented by the Montréal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training (MCHRAT).

Trendzformation

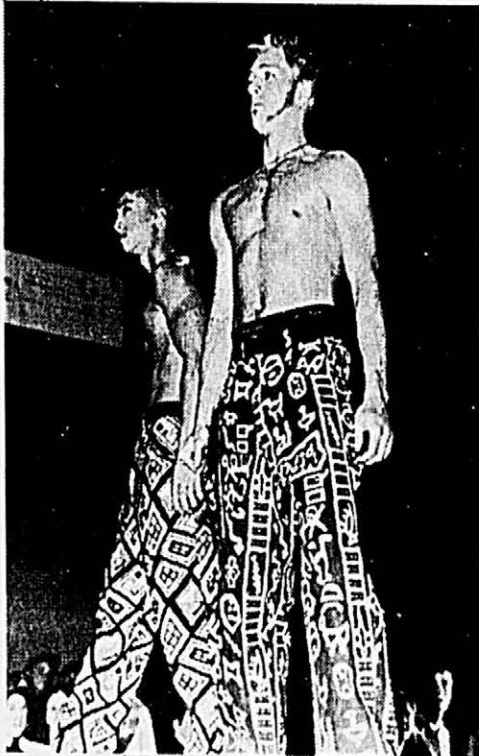
McGill's fashion show

by Ira Salman

photos by Ali Noormohamed

From boys in their tight fitting undies to ladies in their sleek lingerie, McGill's fashion show entitled Trendzformation '98: Fashion Throughout The Decades offered us much sex appeal and a lot of sensual dress for the upcoming spring and summer season. Held at the spacious Metropolis night club in downtown Montréal last Thursday night (March 12), the show was organized by the Management Undergraduate Society's Fashion Show Committee. As has been the tradition over the past five years, all proceeds from the show went to benefit the Farha Foundation in its battle against the AIDS epidemic/virus.

The show featured a collection from a host of local Montréal designers and/or design companies including LaSalle College graduate Julie Lefebvre for Usine Calico and Judith Desjardins, familiar to most as the coat check girl at Jello Bar, with her Jude line of clothing. Beginning with Diesel's young urban look for the 1990's, we were gradually brought back to yesteryear with classic 1920's and 30's tuxedos from Waxman and couture evening dresses from Jong.



For women there was an emphasis both on glamorous dress and on urban activewear. Some of the offerings for spring/summer 1998 included a turquoise dress and tight red pants from Diesel, wide-legged pants from Rebecca Ford, low-cut skirts and elegant cocktail dresses from Jong, and a yellow dress from Judith Desjardins. Other colours incorporated in the collections were creamy whites, dark and icy blues and shades of pink that read 1950's Cadillac and echoed the name of that famous blonde, Marilyn Monroe. For some night time romance or simply feeling sexy in one's boudoir, there was a silverish camisole and a white teddy from Linda Lingerie. There was also plenty of bright oranges and reds to set the night ablaze with passion and desire after a day of wading in those cool and watery blue tones.



And who says that men can't dress. Certainly not Philippe Dubuc who entertained us with a ready-to-wear menswear assortment. Said to be influenced by an Italian cut, Dubuc played a lot with the length of the pant leg in his light grey and mocha coloured suits that were matched up with darker and lighter green shirts. Elegance and style in men's fashion was further underscored by Waxman's formal wear which included a nice selection of tuxedos from Ralph Lauren and Perry Ellis.



From Cuba and Italy we were transported to West Africa with Urbi & Orbi's colourful patterns and prints in colours such as indigo, emerald green, and gold. Of particular interest was one outfit which featured a plaid dress that had the front and back panels detached from one another and a skirt underneath. This scene also brought us the highlight of the night when one of the male models came down the runway with a large snake (probably a python) wrapped around his body. While the audience was definitely awed or shocked, the model seemed quite relaxed. One wonders if we'll be seeing more of this trend in the coming months.

One of the more obscure scenes of the evening was provided by designer Kaoru Miyamoto for the label Di Chen. Adorned in sleeveless male dresses embroidered with silver pieces that gave off a distinctive metallic gleam, two of the models carried onto the stage a wooden stick with a jersey (having a similar look to that of the dresses) dangling from it. With a drum n' bass track pumping away in the background the models made brisk geometrical movements across the stage. Minimalist in presentation, the scene in some strange way evoked ancient Egyptian frescoes where a couple of palace officials might be seen carrying a vine of grapes to King Tut.

From sensuality to sensation, the Trendzformation designers will certainly be that: groundbreaking fashion trend-setters for Montréal and the world.



Events

19•03•1998

Yellow Door Coffee-House (3625 Aylmer: doors open 8:00, entertainment begins 8:30) presents opening act Kate Barclay and main act Bill Bourne

20•03•1998

Yellow Door: opening acts Moses and Jason, main act Dan Mahoney, followed by an open stage

21•03•1998

Yellow Door: opening act Randy Starr and main act Bear Left

Upcoming

27•03•1998

Popular and Environmental Education: Experiences from Mexico and Canada: A day workshop organized by ACCES and QPIRG at Leacock 232. For info: 398 7432

29•03•1998

Showcase Of Med 1 !!MADNESS!! will be at Les Salles du Gesu, 1200 Bleury (corner Ste. Catherine) Tickets, \$10, all proceeds go to Dans la Rue. For info: 485-1627

01•04•1998

South Shore Support Group for families of the mentally ill residing on the South Shore, co-sponsored by AMI-QUEBEC and CLSC Samuel de Champlain in Brossard. The support group meets at 7:00 PM, 5811 Taschereau Boulevard, Brossard. For info: 486-1448.

Rare Scenes of Beauty

Gummo not just about facile nihilism

by Kevin Siu



When it was released two years ago, *Kids*, Harmony Korine's screenwriting debut, provoked an acutely polarized reaction: it was either an honest, if disquieting, document of adolescence, or it was a sensationalist exploitation piece, only a few degrees removed from Calvin Klein's pseudo-child porn ads.

The response to Korine's directing debut, *Gummo*, has been decidedly less mixed. During its run of the US film festivals last fall, audience walkouts were reportedly a widespread occurrence. Even critics, who typically have a higher threshold for discomfort, have been reluctant to praise it. And perhaps you've heard why: feline torture, juvenile glue sniffing, unblinking depiction of mental disability — among a long list of other grievances. But I'll say this: for all of its flaws, of the two works, *Gummo* is the more affecting film.

There are similarities between *Kids* and *Gummo*. Both follow the activities of teenagers over the course of a day, though *Gummo* shifts the milieu from the city to Xenia, a small town in Ohio. Both depict those activities with an unblinking — and uncritical — eye. And those activities are, more often than not, disturbing. Some of the criticisms of *Kids* also apply to *Gummo*. The female characters are undeveloped and, with little exception, they are defined only in relation to males. The main female characters, the sisters, Helen and Dot, are first introduced ripping electrical tape from breasts to enlarge their nipples. A segment about breast cancer is framed by the girl's concern that a mastectomy will deny her chances of finding a boyfriend. Korine may have intended to reflect the reality of adolescence, but he gives little evidence that these women and others have lives beyond the context of their subservience to males. Again here, it is the absence of any critical perspective that implies Korine can only under-

stand these women within this context.

Gummo is also marred by Korine's 'predilection' for shock without any significant purpose. One scene involves a prolonged shot of a dead cat, teeming with maggots, that only induces squeamishness. And that, Korine might argue, is the purpose: to incite a reaction, to create a cinematic 'experience' in the true (perhaps sensationalist) sense of the word. By that point in the film, however, I had witnessed other disturbing scenes that were far more evocative.

And it is here that the two films differ. *Kids* shocks on a very basic level, gradually impelling the viewer to observe the events as clinically as the camera. But in *Gummo*, certain parts deviate from this facile nihilism, surpassing the film's apparent intentions. This is partly a function of Korine's technique and the film's structure. Employing a determinedly amateurish style — from cheap film stock to crooked camera angles to muffled sound — Korine gives *Gummo* the look of a home movie. He book-ends the activities of the two main characters, Solomon and Tummmler, with accounts of a tornado that once ravaged Xenia. Intercut are confessional, mostly anonymous, voice-overs and vignettes of other people in the town, including an unspeaking, somewhat androgynous boy wearing bunny ears. This deceptively loose mélange, and the fact that there is no particular plot to speak of (and certainly no dramatic device to drive the film, unlike in *Kids*), lends *Gummo* an oddly poetic feel; one, however, that is more harsh than serene.

Much of what is interesting in *Gummo*, though, is owing to the characterizations of Solomon and Tummmler. Particularly in the case of Tummmler, Korine attains a startling contrast between the innocence suggested by his appearance and words, and the dark moral indifference betrayed by his actions. When

Tummmler is whipping a near-deceased cat, which him and Solomon have strung up in the woods, there is no evidence of sadistic delight — he just doesn't seem to have anything better to do.

And yet there is a subtle, guarded humanity to Tummmler that reveals itself at unlikely moments. In the middle of the film, there is a scene in which Solomon and Tummmler visit a prostitute. The entire situation is distasteful, from the fact that she is being pimped by her brother to the audience's realization that she has Downs Syndrome, which is not evident until Tummmler enters her room. But as she and Tummmler talk, fully clothed, on her bed, the scene's tone shifts. During a pause, Tummmler asks, "Do you find me attractive?" It's a remarkable and, I think, surprisingly tender scene which manages, momentarily, to obscure the reality of the situation. I have a feeling that Korine and *Kids* director Larry Clark didn't allow such a display of humanity, in, say, Telly or Casper, in *Kids* for fear that it would detract from its single-minded intentions. This scene seems to me the most striking in *Gummo*; one that elevates its quality above *Kids*.

I have many qualms about *Gummo* — as will probably every person who watches it — such as a scene of a gay man (played by the straight Korine) coming on to a dwarf or a mentally retarded woman shaving her eyebrows. Moreover, the film treads too fine a line between realistically portraying life in a small, impoverished town in the US and perpetrating stereotypes of White Trash America: glue-sniffing, guns, incest, heavy metal, drinking, arm wrestling. But *Gummo* is the most original movie I've seen so far this year. For all its gratuitous ugliness, it does have its aforementioned scene of beauty. And ultimately, it is that scenes that resonates far longer.

Gummo begins at Cinéma du Parc tomorrow and plays for a week.

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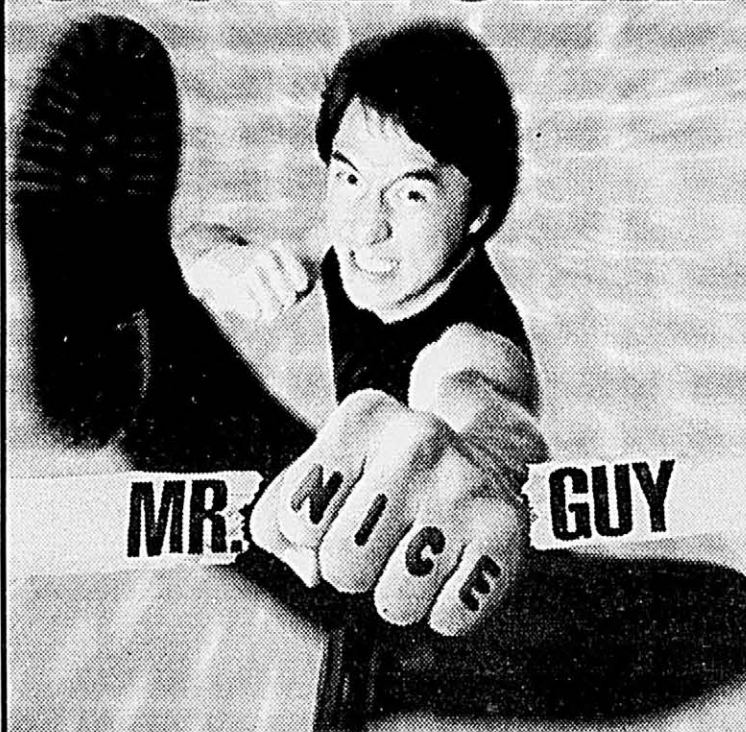
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SPECIALS

Stomp's store

by Patrick Lejtenyi

Tucked away in a cosy corner on Rachel and Coloniale streets is a sizzling little secret that has Montréal's ska scene buzzing to the sounds of rudie rares and hard-to-finds. Stomp! Records, owned and oper-

ated by Jordan Swift of the Kingpins and Matthew Collyer of the Planet Smashers, opened doors to the public in general but to Rudies and skinheads in particular on February 13th. Not dissuaded by the unlucky omen, Swift and Collyer are men with a mission: to bring the music to the scenesters, without having them spend their hard-earned bucks and time searching for obscure (and grossly expensive) imports. The music at Stomp!, mostly CDs but also some vinyl and even some 45s, is a widely varied collection of Canadian, American, Caribbean, European, Australian and even Asian ska, all within the average under-employed scenesters' price range.



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Swift and Collyer had been running Stomp! as a record label for three years out of their apartments until they opened up shop at their present location. They have over a dozen releases to date with five bands signed, including the Kingpins, the Smashers and other local ska bands. Gangster Politics, another Stomp! signee, will be releasing an album next month, produced by none less than Victor Rice, old-

guard scenester guru south of the border. Having traded extensively with bands and other small labels across the world, Stomp! has managed to build up an extensive and impressive backlog that they can afford to sell at lower prices than the monstrous, soulless mega-stores that have pillaged and conquered their way across the world. Part of Stomp!'s appeal is, in fact, its intimacy: the feel is more of a hang-out than the centre of Montréal's ska enlightenment (and what, a fourth renaissance within the past decade and a half?).

While the focus is mainly on the label, Swift, who left a dead-end job at Concordia to run the store and label, and Collyer, an engineering Ph.D. candidate at McGill, also want to bring the indie ska scene to new heights. The majority of their music is from independent labels and small bands, with a few exceptions, including Rancid (ex-Poison Ivy ska turned kick-ass punk turned a nineties-esque melange of the two) and Helicat Records, who handle Hepcat, one of the all-time greatest bands ever to emerge from the U.S. West Coast. "These guys are just too good to pass off," says Collyer. He speaks without hyperbole; after listening to a Hepcat platter, one can even say he speaks with definite understatement.

But Stomp! is more than just a simple record store and label headquarters. Besides carrying enough tunes to keep any aficionado up to their armpits in music there is also an assortment of books, magazines, and clothing: Fred Perry shirts, James Jackets, band T-shirts, pins and patches of all sorts are available. While it may seem like the ultimate in one-stop shopping for those wanting in on the scene, Swift deflects criticism that any snotty-nosed kid can walk in off the street and walk out looking like a seasoned scenester. Wary that some of the older faces may be

irate at a potential vulgarisation of their coveted lifestyle, Jordan, himself a ten year veteran of the mod-garage-ska scene, says "I think most of the scenesters will be happy about the store. We carry stuff for them, and you can find stuff here that you can't find anywhere else." Matthew concurs and makes a pertinent point: "Most of the people who buy our stuff are already in the scene. The people who criticise us don't realise that we're not trying to become mainstream - we're not trying to turn kids who can't dance at Foulfoules into scenesters."

That said, the guys at Stomp! are not intent on stopping after cornering the ska market. Once firmly established as a reputable and hip enterprise, they plan to diversify to include other styles of music and fashions that are simmering underneath the mainstream in Montréal. Although Stomp! is, at least so far, a purely ska label with mostly ska contacts, the store will be carrying more and more Sixties garage, punk, mod and rockabilly albums to satisfy the less visible elements of the Montréal scene. "I want to make everyone

happy," says Jordan. Within a month or two Stomp! will be fully stocked, ready to provide for every whim and taste.

a store like this in Canada. The closest thing you could come to is Moon Records and 99X in New York meets upstairs at Dutchy's. "There is still a lingering respect for Montréal's now-defunct mecca of hipness, which was a second home to scenesters growing up in the Eighties and early Nineties. "There was IXL from Toronto, but they're gone now." So does this make Stomp! one of the premier ska stores in Canada? "I don't know about that," says Matthew, "but I've got guys from Toronto planning vacations to



Asked to explain what makes their store different from other indie record stores, Matthew finds himself at a loss. "I don't think there is

come here." It figures.

Stomp! Records is located at 78 Coloniale E.



Sticking it to El Hombre

Anarchist granddaddy Bookchin tells the tale of Spain's anarchists, propaganda-style

The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868-1936
by Murray Bookchin. AK Press
1998, 316 pages

Review by Patrick Lejtenyi

"Anarchy" is a much maligned, if little understood, term: we tend to think of Anarchists as either fiery-eyed bearded bomb-throwing nihilists, or as disenfranchised, sullenly leftist crackpots hammering out revolutionary tracts few will ever read, much less take seriously.

Murray Bookchin, author of *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868-1936*, is neither. Although he describes himself as a lifelong radical, active since the early 1930s, the septuagenarian has written a lucid and intelligent account of the Anarchist movement spanning over the formative half-century preceding the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Anarchists themselves attained an almost mythical status among their contemporaries and the revolutionary movements of the 1960s as a heroic, dedicated group fighting against the overwhelming forces of reaction led by the fascist General Franco.

Like all myths, however, for every grain of truth there is a desert of exaggeration. Bookchin is aware of this, and in most cases is fair in the treatment of his subject. When examining the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in the 1920s, for instance, Bookchin makes no secret of the lack of Anarchist activity at the time, nor did they contribute to his eventual downfall. While mostly praising the Anarchist movement, he does not shy away from pointing out some of their more obvious flaws and weaknesses.

To trace the ideological roots of the movement, Bookchin first examines one of the leading Anarchist theorists of the nineteenth century, the Russian Mikhail Bakunin. A contemporary of Marx's, Bakunin is portrayed by Bookchin in glowing terms as an almost divine messiah on a mission to emancipate mankind from international capital. As opposed to Marx, Bakunin does not call for a dictatorship of the proletariat,

nor does he believe that the State is an end unto itself. Rather, Bakunin's is a federalist, anti-statist ideology, not overly concerned with the control of the means of production but instead focusing on the micro-level of the village. The mutual aid and gentle community spirit of the village should pervade the industrial society, not, as Marx would have it, vice-versa.

Bookchin cites the most popular tenets of Anarchism, as written by both Bakunin and a later Russian revolutionary, Prince Peter Kropotkin, as being violence, anticlericalism, atheism, faith in technology and science, and an emphasis on the village as the most important social unit. He does little to address the movement's strong pacifist heritage, preferring to focus on its more violent elements.

For the Anarchists, the inherent conflict was between the social community and the political state. The evils of industrialisation have, according to the Anarchists, robbed the workers of their dignity and basic humanity; their very goal is to restore them and install a non-exploitive system of industrial cooperation. It is a more humanistic and appealing millenarian philosophy than say, Marxism-Leninism, and its leaders may have been more frugal with human lives, but the Anarchist ideology remained, to its bitter defeat, rigid in thought and ruthless in practice. During the 1910s and 1920s the Anarchist *atentados* and subsequent reprisals killed thousands of Spaniards in tit-for-tat murders and bombings. Violence, always a means to an end, was never far removed from the Anarchists.

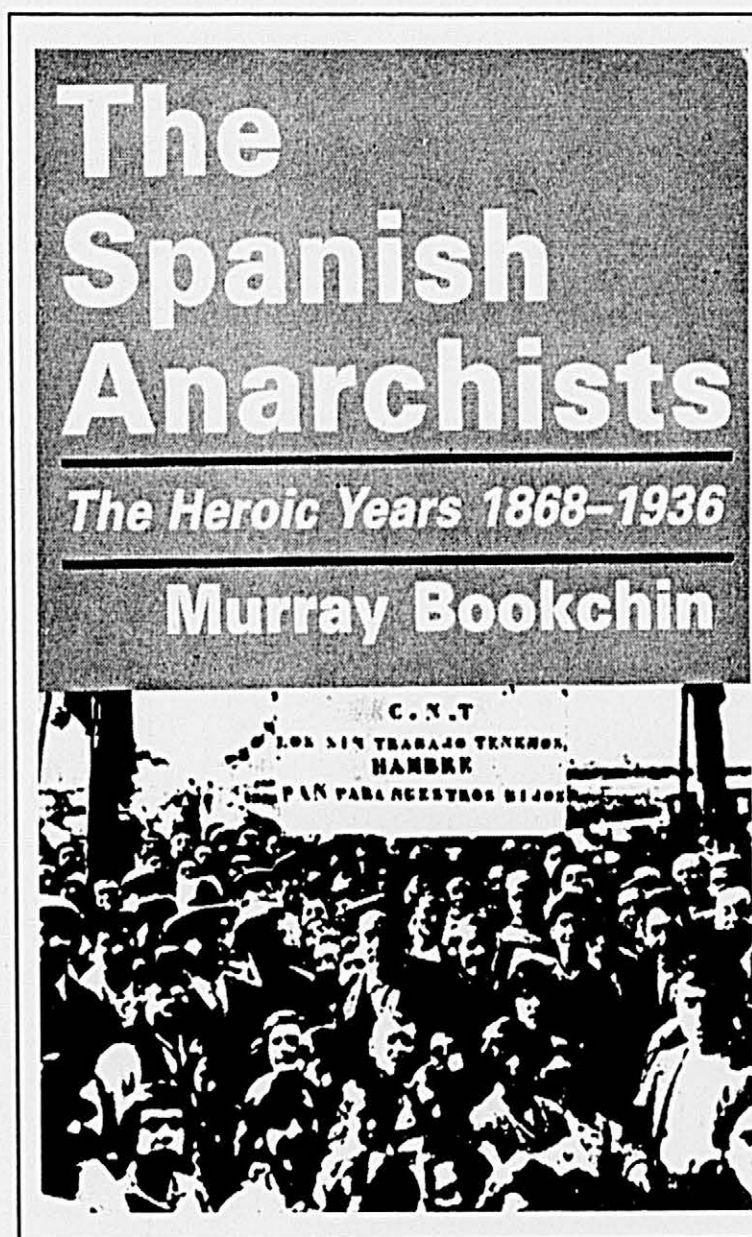
Bookchin presents us with a list of legitimate grievances typical to any country undergoing the painful process of industrialisation: long hours, low pay, mindless toil, and a near absence of any political rights. The Spanish industrial and agrarian proletariat, as in England, France, Germany and other developing countries in the West, were heartily and thoroughly exploited by the ruling classes, the Church and the bourgeoisie. Land workers were little better off than serfs, and the

lower classes were rife with alcoholism, prostitution and gambling. Bookchin ably recounts the destitute conditions of the masses and points his finger straight at

his history deals with the CNT, the *Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo*, the largest Spanish Anarchist umbrella group of the early twentieth century. As

flaws. First, it reads like a litany of strikes mixed with an almost embarrassing edification of some of the more violent and spectacular leaders. He heaps scorn upon the Socialists and Communists, not to mention the three main branches of the Establishment - the military, the Church and the bourgeoisie. He fires invective at the moderate left, accusing them of selling out the proletariat even though - and on several occasions he himself mentions this - the Socialists were better equipped both ideologically and politically to represent them. The Anarchists, who until the 1930s had a policy of complete political abstention, were largely ineffective due to their very hostility to the political system in improving the lot of the masses. Bookchin naturally realises this and, being an Anarchist himself, chooses to blame other leftist parties for complicity with a hostile regime. As an avowed lifelong Anarchist this is only natural, but does damage to the credibility of the book by its inherent bias. It is a history by an Anarchist for Anarchists; its objective viewpoint leaves much to be desired.

Second, and this may sound picky, but as an historical work it is poor. There is little factual documentation and no comprehensible list of sources. In his bibliographical essay Bookchin cites a list of books consulted but in such a sloppy way that any search for a list of sources is difficult and frustrating. He does not footnote nor does he substantiate some of the sweeping statements he makes with historical documents. He quotes from a handful of secondary historical works and some contemporary journals, but again without footnotes or a list of sources. His research no doubt has been extensive, having consulted many works in at least three languages, and he has conducted personal interviews with veterans of the movement, but the lack of properly annotated sources is a major drawback to an otherwise fairly comprehensive work. As a propaganda piece it has its merits, but as history it is sorely lacking.



those responsible, whose culpability for the dehumanisation of the majority of the population is undeniable and irrefutable. This makes for inflammatory reading and helps us understand the futility and despair felt among the masses, if not sympathise with them. Bookchin peppers the text with words like "criminal," "dehumanising," "exploitation," "betrayal" and "treachery" to get his point across, and he is effective. As a professional revolutionary who has been honing his oratorical skills for over sixty years, he hasn't lost his passion for ferociously denouncing the established elite or arousing righteous indignation.

The most interesting part of

Bookchin tells us, the CNT, formed in 1910 and declared illegal following an unsuccessful uprising in Barcelona shortly thereafter, led the Anarchist movement in a pendulous shift between moderation and extremism, armed conflict and collaboration, for a quarter of a century until the Civil War. Although it won some victories, Bookchin is honest enough to point out the fact that the CNT was, more often than not, self-defeating in its radicalism and rife with rivalries with other leftist groups for the allegiance of the proletariat.

Well-written and informative as it is, the book, published (perhaps ominously) by the AK Press, suffers from at least two major



One Sound At A Time

Portishead poised to bite

by Alex Halperin

It's no longer an issue; Portishead are huge. Never again will they be that awesome tiny cool band with the revolutionary sound that you introduce your roommates to and impress them immensely with how cool you are (unless your roommates have been living under a rock.) Portishead are from Bristol, just like every other band who has ever picked up a sampler to screech about sadness and misery: i.e., the trip hop family. Massive attack are their grandparents; Tricky is their uncle. Their newest, self-titled album, is much darker than their first. It incorporates original samples, and the tedium of piecing these together which the band took great

pride in divulging. It has earned rave reviews from virtually all publications and no Grammy, an equation that ensures quality.

Three band members were present for a strangely regimented press conference. Jeff the mixer, Adrian the guitar player, and Dave the producer. These three blokes did not look like rock stars, with the possible exception of Jeff, who has a bit of a rascallions leer about him. Dave and Andrew looked more the type to pull you a pint at the Bristol King's Arms than being the unseen musicians behind an unbelievably hip band. I assume that explains their answer to my inquiry about the advantages of being icons. With an

honest look, Dave answers, "Nothin' changed since we were in the studio [recording our first album *Dummy*]."

Beth, the hermetic lead singer was absent at the press conference. The tour began the night before and journalists were curious why she was so quick to turn away from the audience when she wasn't singing. Under pressure, Jeff explains "she isn't shy or embarrassed in normal life but that performing in front of three thousand people is not normal life." This phenomena of ignoring the audience, also seen with other bands (Sneaker Pimps) is intriguing: the next step in the downward-spiraling Kurt Cobain "I'll take

your money but I won't like it" attitude.

One topic Portishead made clear was their demand for absolute control. The band admitted that this requirement nixes their opportunity for collaborations. They also complained about MTV stating that they "couldn't be experimental with their video's." Their most likely multimedia work in the future would be for a film. They swear, however, that it won't be in a Hollywood movie, where "the songs" in the movie for ten seconds and gets on the soundtrack."

The bands favorite topic was their new album, which they described as "heavier" and produced

with more aggression than *Dummy*. The technologically illiterate, Jeff described the process of sampling. While the previous album sampled primarily from unoriginal sources, the second contains hundreds of original sounds from synthesizer rhythms to traffic noise. The process, described by Adrian as "incredibly tedious," consisted in part of building a library of samples recorded onto vinyl, which explains the long delay before the release. But now that the album is out, the good people of Portishead, even seemingly disappointed the conference had to end, are nevertheless poised to take over the world, one sound at a time.



Still Rose-Coloured And Whimsical

Review of *Yeomen of the Guard*

by Hanna Rabinovich

Back in Moyse Hall once again, I sit as straight and upright as possible so that I may see over the Paul Bunyon look-alike directly in front of me. The orchestra warms up, the lights dim, and the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Yeomen of the Guard* begins to unfold.

The first thing a theatre buff may notice is the production's 1930's setting since this Victorian show is originally set in the 16th century. Having never seen the production in its "true" setting, the alteration fortunately didn't bother me. Walking out of the theatre, however, I overheard several people lamenting the show's adoption of jazz; with twisted faces and raised eyebrows, they claimed the new historical setting was jarring and the new jazz tempo disturbing. Some members

of the audience had difficulty accepting the newly included lewd gestures, which they couldn't relate to the attitudes of the original 16th century time frame. They failed to realize, however, that this transposition allowed the director to work in certain nuances, such as the one in the infamous godfather satire scene.

Well, I liked it. Who wouldn't enjoy watching four comic gangsters singing like a barbershop quartet, or listening to the hilarious rantings of a traveling comedian? Spread throughout the show were amazing swing dance numbers, choreographed by LynnAnne Turcotte. The actors of *Yeomen* are astonishingly multi-talented. In addition to intricate dance steps, they are able to toss and be tossed in the fashion

of the swing style.

Here it might be useful to give a brief summary of the play, though it's not an easy task: Criminal gets arrested. Gangsters free criminal. Criminal falls in love. Criminal gets girl. The end. Alright, not exactly; there's a side plot of course, but unfortunately between the faulty mics, and the lack of diction in some numbers, it's impossible to understand every event. Yet because of the great song and dance routines, I didn't really need all the plot intricacies to enjoy *Yeomen*.

Although several of the main characters' voices were worth noting, it was the choral numbers that really linger in my mind. The harmony and strength of their collective voices was outstanding, and they performed very well as a group.

In addition to the group, the soloists had notable moments of their own. Elsie Maynard (Susan Pollett) is the ambiguous companion of traveling comedian Jack Point (Jake Feldman). The two of them arrive in Chicago, and are immediately worked into the plot development of the play. Feldman, known in certain areas for his ability to sing anywhere from bass to soprano, is the ultimate in comic relief. As for Pollett, there is nothing ambiguous about her singing. Rich and sweet, her voice resonates throughout the theatre in her various solos. Equally talented is Ramona Gilmour-Darling who plays Phoebe, the daughter of the "godfather" of gangsters. Gilmour-Darling is energetic and sultry, playing both the adorable daughter and the coquettish flirt.

Accompanying the many talented cast members in their musical numbers, the orchestra, conducted by Jason Lopez, was outstanding. At times almost classical, and at times jazz, the instrumentals were central to the enjoyment and consistency of the play.

Even the diehard loyal fans of the "original" *Yeomen* had to agree that Alex Simon's production of *Yeomen of the Guard* was entertaining and impressive. In an age where Shakespeare is continually interpreted into the 20th century, it is fitting and ingenious to place this comic musical into a time which is familiar, and yet still rose-coloured and whimsical to modern day audiences.

Yeomen is playing in Moyse Hall, in the Arts building, until the 21st of March.

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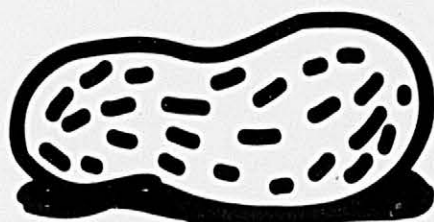
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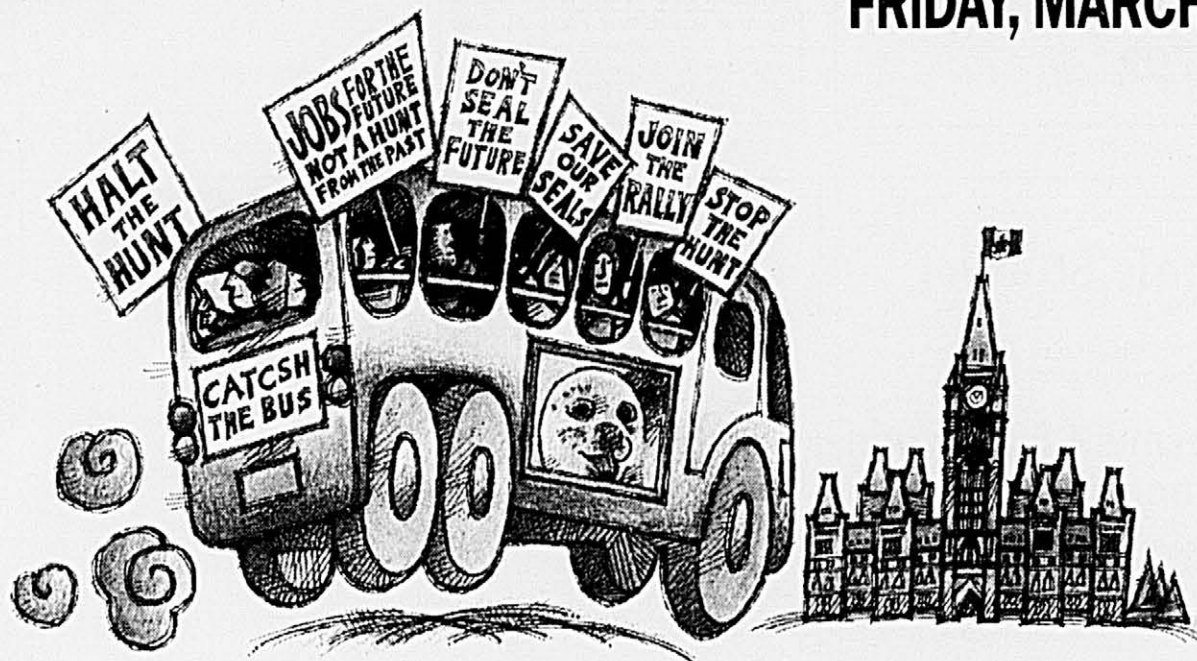
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